



OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT/CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL, THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF BANKERS OF NIGERIA (CIBN), PROFESSOR SEGUN AJIBOLA, PH.D., FCIB AS THE CHAIRMAN AT THE ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BANKING & FINANCE, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY, OJO HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017

PROTOCOLS

Eighteen years ago, Mike Bowlin, Chairman, American Petroleum Institute noted and I quote ***“We’ve embarked on the beginning of the Last Days of the Age of Oil. Nations of the world that are striving to modernize will make choices different from the ones we have made. They will have to. And even today’s industrial powers will shift energy use patterns.... The market share for carbon-rich fuels will diminish, as the demand for other forms of energy grows...”***

The above quote is highly instructive for a nation like Nigeria whose primary source of foreign exchange earnings is oil – presently estimated to be above 90 percent of total forex earnings. The topic for this Public Lecture, **Deregulating the Nigeria Economy as we Move to the End of the Era of Oil**, is therefore not only germane to our current economic realities as a nation but critical if the marginal improvement achieved in the country’s growth indices would be sustained.

It is particularly intriguing that Bowlin penned these words close to two decades ago when the World was just being ushered into what analysts have called the fourth Industrial Revolution, fuelled primarily by technological disruptions whose spate and speed are assuming an alarming dimension. It is saying the obvious that majority of these disruptions are often initiated by private sectors players with governments creating the enabling business environment.

Just imagine what Bowlin thoughts would be in 2017

- When the United States of America is aggressively developing its “Shale Oil” sector;



- When there is an increasing advocacy for a “cleaner” environment and investments in Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) and other forms of clean energy sources hit \$287.5 billion in 2016;
- When the prospects of self-driving and electric cars have started gathering momentum, moving away from the realm of imaginations;
- When Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics and machine learning may drastically reduce the need for mechanization with its attendant need for fossil fuels;
- When the revolution in the Internet world continues to allow people to work from home while effectively being monitored on deliverables; when the Internet of Things (IoT) is redefining the way we relate to the inanimate world with little or no need for direct physical contact...

The list is almost endless.

I believe the developments I have mentioned above are not strange to most people in this Hall, what is strange, or worrisome, is why Nigeria has failed over the years to successfully implement the various deregulation policies in order to ensure that other sectors are developed as veritable means of forex earnings in the country. This is especially necessary as oil may soon fade away as the attractive bride in world economies. I fancy the country should learn from the deregulation of the communications sector that saved Nigerians from the horrors of Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) and facilitated the sector’s role as an enabler of growth and forex earnings.

Creating a favourable environment for healthy competition among investors in the Nigerian economy, I imagine, is a strategic imperative for the country considering the poor performance of the different sectors under various governments’ regulations. Let me quickly add that the success recorded in the communications sector should, as a matter of urgency, be replicated in the power and infrastructural sectors of the economy. These sectors hold huge potentials in stimulating activities of other segments of the economy for forex earnings.

I do not want to succumb to the temptation of delivering the Lecture as my role as the Chairman of this programme is to moderate the proceedings. We have an erudite scholar who hardly needs an introduction to do justice to the topic of this Public Lecture in person of



Professor Pat Utomi. My submissions above are intended to stimulate discussions in addition to those to be raised by the Guest Lecturer.

At The Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), we continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure that funds are channeled to the real sector of the economy, particularly the Micro, Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (MSMEs).

Let me conclude by thanking specially the Vice Chancellor of this great University, Prof. Olanrewaju Fagbohun and the Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences, Prof. S.O. Fajonyomi for giving me the opportunity to Chair this important programme. I thank the Head of Department of Banking and Finance, Dr S. O. Ashamu, a former Head of that Department, Dr, Mrs Toyin Oluitan and other distinguished members of my Institute in the Department and this University. Some of them have been coopted into some key Committees of our revered Institute. I also thank the Organizing Committee ably led by Dr C.A. Jegede which no doubt has done a good job.

Thank you all for your kind attention and God bless.

Professor Segun Ajibola

Ph.D, FCIB, FICA, FERP, F.IoD, ACTI, MNES, LLB, BL

President/Chairman of Council

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